



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE SOURCE, OR SCIENTIFIC, METHOD IN HISTORY.

HUMAN life is so complex, and education covers so many sides of it, that it is hard for even the older members of the profession to get a satisfactory definition of education. If it is hard for the older members to get a definition, what shall we say of the difficulty with which the younger members get a mental grasp of its aims, its principles, and its methods? But as time goes on we are better able to analyze the situation and to determine our aims by the end to be reached by the teaching of any given subject.

Perhaps no subject in the school curriculum, unless it be geography, is at present more unsettled as to its aims and its methods than is the subject of history. It is so unsettled that we are not able to agree even upon definition. The old idea that history is a narrative is found at once to be erroneous, when we consider that, were it a narrative, we should study the narrative as such. We should study to find whether the narrative was well written; whether there was a happy choice of words; whether skill was shown in putting them together into sentences and paragraphs; whether the narrative was well proportioned, etc.; now, as a matter of fact, we know that these things enter only incidentally into the study of history.

If history is not a narrative, the next definition that naturally suggests itself is that history is a record. But this, too, is found to be erroneous and to lead to grave errors in teaching; for, first, it suggests no clue to the real historic problems; and, second, it leads to the belief that teaching history consists in transferring it from the book to the mind of the learner by means of mechanical memory. But we know that one may be able to repeat whole volumes and yet not be able to guide himself or to influence others by the rich experience of the past. In order to be heir of all the ages, one must be able to do more than repeat the records of so-called historians.

If history is not a record and is not a narrative, then what is

it? The writer feels surer now than he felt some years ago, that he was in line with the scientific movements of the times when he defined history as that study which enables us to get knowledge of the events and influences that went to make a people what it is.

By this definition, the finding of events and influences—that is, the finding of truth—becomes the first problem in the study of history; and the finding of what effect the events or influences had—that is, interpretation—becomes the second problem. It may be interesting to read of events that men imagined took place, of influences that they imagined certain things had; but it is not safe to try to regulate life's activities by anything short of actual experience. Adventure and experiment may be necessary for the race's advancement, but success or failure will be borne most happily if we learn to distinguish at all times that which has been proven by human experience from that which remains to be proven.

By our definition, literary criticism comes in incidentally; for we may ask: Does our author, by his choice and arrangement of words, by his proportioning and paragraphing, and by his choice of illustrations, figures, and incidents, come as near as possible to making his account have the same impression on us that the actual event would have had? But this is only another way of asking: Did he find and convey to us truth?

After finding a definition for scientific history, the next question which naturally suggests itself is: Why do we teach it? The answer to this question is given nowhere clearer and stronger than in the report of the Committee of Seven: "Not an accumulation of information, but the habit of correct thinking, is the supreme end." Farther on it says: "History is helpful in developing the scientific habit of mind and thought." It defines the scientific habit of mind and thought to be "the recognition that sound conclusions rest upon somebody's patient investigations; that, although we must accept the work of others, everybody is required to study and think and examine before he positively asserts." The second result which the committee says we get from history study is a body of knowledge which becomes a

source of pleasure and gratification; the third result is power and skill in handling books; and the fourth result is culture of the imagination. The last result of historical study named by the committee is the power to express oneself in well-chosen words.

Now, what method will come nearest enabling us to realize these aims? Certainly it will not consist of memorizing the words of some narrative text-book, though that may be a valuable and helpful part of the method. Besides the memorizing method three others have been suggested. They are the source, the library, and the combined.

The source method is a method of teaching history just as a scientific historian would study a topic if he wished to write on it. It is a method of studying history much as a natural science would be studied in a good laboratory. From the *geography of the country*, from the *buildings and remains*, from *works of art* or, next best, *pictures of them*, from *official reports*, and *records and accounts made by eye- and ear-witnesses* or, next best, *copies of them* — from such *technically called sources* the pupil gathers his notes from which to make an outline for an essay.

After the teacher has approved this outline, which may vary from the merest sketch to the most carefully prepared brief, the pupil writes his essay. Then he is ready for his reading from the narrative text, or secondary writer. This reading is very important, as it enables the pupil to measure his work by that of a master. If they agree, well and good; if not he must hunt for the cause. It may be he has not examined some source which his secondary writer examined; it may be that he drew a wrong inference from the sources which he did examine; in any event, he is to find the cause and make the proper correction.

It will be seen at once that the full source method, as outlined above, requires much time and critical thought on the part of both teacher and pupil. While the writer cannot recommend it as a method to be used in all of the history work in the secondary schools, he thinks that every pupil should be required to work up a topic or two by the source method. It gives pupils respect for the good history, and something of a feeling of dis-

satisfaction with the poor history ; it makes them critical of their sources of information, and it makes them cautious about making statements that are not founded on sufficient data.

The library method differs from the source in that a pupil gathers his notes for his essay from either sources or secondary writers. This enables him to use his inborn faculty—imitation ; and if his teacher sees to it that he does not imitate too much, the suggestions from the master-writers as to selection of incidents and illustrations and the arrangement of topics are very valuable.

The combined method consists of the source, the library, and the old memory methods combined. When a topic admits best of it, the source method is used ; but when sources are too scarce and arrangement too complex, the library method is used ; at other times, when pivotal dates or events are reached, the old-fashioned memory method is used. The writer thinks this combined method is the best method. It enables one to adapt his material to his pupils and to adapt his method to his pupils and to the matter to be learned.

That the source method has introduced into our history work a valuable element, no teacher doubts who has observed a fair trial of the methods ; that it has introduced an element that is with us to stay is equally certain. It is interesting to observe the instinctive longing of children for the certainty that comes from having gone to the sources of a conclusion. One teacher tells of using an outline prepared by me and having the sources and authorities or secondary writers given separately at the top of the page. After using it about three weeks, without calling attention to the difference between sources and authorities, and without showing preference for either, she was surprised to find a child of eleven asking : "Teacher, what is the difference between a source and an authority ?" She told them as best she could, and then one remarked : "Well, then what we read from Marco Polo was a source ;" and another said : "And what we had from *The Gentleman of Elvas* was a source." She says that after that they invariably chose to reread sources whenever they reread anything.

I think children's preferences for sources are easily explained. Besides their instinctive longing for the certainty that comes from having examined the source, the clearer understanding that comes from having the incidents and details that a source offers gives them pleasure. The ordinary text-book presents a running list of generalizations which they cannot become interested in, and which they cannot believe because they know not the individuals from which the generalizations were made. For example, one of our popular text-books says: "All the laws were made to favor the English manufacturer at the expense of the colonists." Now, how can a child know that that is true, and, not knowing that it is true, how can he remember it? A popular source-book presents copies of the laws themselves as follows:

Forasmuch as Wooll and the Woollen Manufactures of Cloth, . . . are the greatest and most profitable commodities of this Kingdom, on which the . . . Trade of the Nation do(es) chiefly depend: And whereas great Quantities of the like Manufactures have of late been made, . . . in the English plantations in America, and are exported from thence to foreign Markets, heretofore supplied from England which will tend to the Ruin of the . . . Woollen Manufacture of this Realm . . . (therefore) be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty . . . that . . . no Wool . . . Woollen Yarn, cloth . . . or Woollen manufacture whatsoever, . . . of any of the English plantations of America; shall be loaden . . . in any ship . . . upon any pretence whatsoever as likewise that no such Wooll . . . shall be loaden upon any horse, Cart or other Carriage . . . to be exported . . . out of the said Plantations or to any other place whatsoever.

This law is followed by a copy of a still more stringent law for preventing the manufacture of hats. After reading the copies of these two laws and being told by his book or by his teacher that they are typical, the child is ready to make his own generalizations. There may be times in the study of history when it is necessary for the child to take the generalizations of others, but in a case like this it is a sin to prevent his getting the growth that comes from making his own generalization.

ARTHUR D. CROMWELL.

HUMBOLDT, IA.